

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer node (16) for operating in a system comprising a plurality of network clusters, wherein a number of network clusters comprise a plurality of computer nodes, the computer node comprising a synchronisation unit (21) for comparing network timing information for a first network (11) with network timing information for a second network (12) and for communicating to the first network (11) a sign of the difference between the first network timing information and the second network timing information to allow the first network (11) to alter its network timing information using the sign of the difference wherein a network clock rate between the first network (11) and the second network (12) is reduced in sufficiently small values to avoid loss of local synchronisation with other computer nodes in its network cluster.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) A computer node (16) according to claim 1, wherein the network timing information corresponds to the phase of the network clock.

4. (Currently Amended) A computer node (16) according to any preceding claim 1, wherein the synchronisation unit (21) is arranged to provide the sign of the difference to the second network (12) to allow the second network (12) to alter its network timing information to allow the network timing difference between the first network (11) and the second network (12) to be reduced.

5. (Currently Amended) A computer node (16) according to any preceding claim 1, wherein the computer node (16) is arranged to be coupled to the first network (11).

6. (Currently Amended) A computer node (16) according to any preceding claim 1, wherein the computer node (16) is arranged to be coupled to the second network (12) via a second computer node (17).

7. (Currently Amended) A system comprising a plurality of network clusters comprising:

a first network (11), a second network (12) and

a computer node (16) having a synchronisation unit (21) for comparing network timing information for the first network (11) with network timing information for the second

network (12) and for communicating to the first network (11) ~~the a sign of the difference between the first network timing information and the second network timing information such that a network clock rate of to allow the first network (11) to is alter reduced in sufficiently small values to avoid loss of local synchronisation with other computer nodes in its network cluster its network timing information~~ using the sign of the difference to allow the network timing difference between the first network (11) and the second network (12) to be reduced.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 7, wherein the first network (11) has a plurality of nodes (13) and the first network timing information is used to maintain synchronisation of the plurality of nodes (13), wherein the change in network timing information is sufficiently small to allow the plurality of nodes (13) to maintain synchronisation should one of the plurality of nodes not change its timing information in response to the sign of the difference communicated by the computer node (16).

10. (Currently Amended) A method for allowing synchronisation of a first network (11) and a second network (12) ~~in a system comprising a plurality of network clusters, wherein a number of network clusters comprise a plurality of computer nodes~~, the method comprising:

comparing network timing information for the first network (11) with network timing information for the second network; (12)[,] and

communicating to the first network (11) ~~the a sign of the difference between the first network timing information and the second network timing information wherein a network clock rate between to allow the first network (11) to alter its network timing information to allow the network timing difference between the first network (11) and the second network (12) to be is reduced in sufficiently small values to avoid loss of local synchronisation with other computer nodes in its network cluster.~~